

## THE SAN JOAQUIN RIVER RIPARIAN HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECT

### Introduction

- The Friant Water Users Authority, the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations share a strong interest in the mainstem of the San Joaquin River and have embarked upon discussions about mutually acceptable restoration activities. As an initial matter, we have agree to work on riparian habitat restoration project along the San Joaquin River corridor from Friant Dam to the confluence with the Merced River. Also, other projects may be pursued as consensus is reached.
- The project is its early stages of initiation. Location of areas for work will be determined during the development phase of the project. Riparian restoration may take a variety of forms and the project will need to be developed to ensure that it is consistent with other goals and objectives established for the San Joaquin River. This is a stakeholder driven project that will need the help and assistance of all of the interested parties and the public.

### Who

- The project is currently being proposed by the Friant Water Users Authority (FWUA), the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), and the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations (PCFFA). This group has been meeting to discuss mutually beneficial projects that support the goal of improving the environmental conditions of the San Joaquin River. Outreach is currently underway to involve other stakeholder interests, including the landowners adjacent to the San Joaquin River.
- The Bureau of Reclamation (Bureau) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) have agreed to appoint a project manager who will work closely with the stakeholders in the development of the project. The project manager will coordinate any federal agency involvement, including project funding.
- The active participation of other federal, state and local governmental agencies, landowners, environmental groups and interested parties will be essential for a successful project. New partnerships will need to be formed in moving this effort forward.

## Process for the Project Development

- The project development process will be divided into three phases: Phase One, initial development of project scope and project organization. This will also include the development of some rough costs estimates; Phase Two, project plan development and regulatory compliance and refinement of cost estimates; and Phase Three, project implementation. Opportunities for non-controversial immediate actions will be identified and pursued throughout the project.
- Phase I is essentially the startup phase of the project. It provides for concurrent activities including: the completion of a preliminary scope of work for the project, completion of agreements that may be necessary to guide the project including the development of an organizational framework providing for the close involvement of the stakeholder interests, and completion of a plan of action, including a public involvement process. During this phase an active stakeholder program will be key to project formulation. It is anticipated that this phase will take two to three months to complete.
- Phase II provides for project development and any regulatory compliance activities including NEPA/CEQA compliance. Historic and existing conditions will be analyzed to establish a solid basis for proposed project activities. Technical analysis will be performed to determine project implementation actions. These studies will include environmental, biological, hydrological, engineering, land use analysis, modeling, soils analysis and other pertinent analysis. Alternative project actions will be developed and refined. A strategy for implementation of the Project's actions will be developed. Phase II will take approximately twelve to eighteen months to complete.
- Phase III is the implementation phase. Implementation should begin as soon as any regulatory compliance and agreements are in place, including funding, for any given activity.

## Funding

- It is anticipated that this effort falls under the purview of the CVPIA. Phase One and Phase Two are anticipated to be supported by the Restoration Fund and/or other funding that may be available under the budgets of the Bureau and FWS. The use of Restoration Fund moneys for the Phase Three implementation actions is also anticipated, although other partnerships for funding of the implementation actions may also become available.

## Summary

- The San Joaquin River Riparian Habitat Restoration Project is in its early stages. Active participation in the project by federal, state and local agencies,

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environmental organizations, local landowners and the public is encouraged and will be essential for success. The organization of the project and its oversight are just now being put together.

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